

Awards Entry Form

Category: Occupant Protection

Entry Names:

The Kennewick Police Department
Chief Ken Hohenberg
Captain Craig Littrell
Sgt. Ken Lattin
Officer Mike Gaines

Person submitting the entry:

Jonna VanDyk, Occupant Protection Program Mgr.
Washington Traffic Safety Commission
jvandyk@wtsc.wa.gov
360-586-3870

Describe the effort:

Given a special 403 grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to develop and implement a statewide nighttime seat belt enforcement project, the Commission was left with the task of educating law enforcement about how to conduct nighttime patrols. Pilot projects and methods were tested by the State Patrol in advance of obtaining the grant. Once obtained, the project would also include police and sheriff agencies conducting patrols that were quite different from seat belt patrols law enforcement were used to. The Kennewick Police Department volunteered to look at the information developed by the State Patrol and pilot test the methods on city streets in such a way that they could be videotaped and used in the development of an educational video for law enforcement. This required the work of multiple officers on several nights on their own time. It began with a briefing at headquarters, then enforcement at various intersections to pilot test procedures. Following this, interviews of participating officers were conducted to obtain their insights about the procedures.

The Kennewick Police Department has been a project leader in the nighttime seat belt campaign effort. They have participated heavily in every mobilization, even in “sustained” enforcement patrols. They helped facilitate media coverage and they volunteered to be interviewed at a post-mobilization briefing that was conducted for the NHTSA-funded project evaluation.

Another project being developed by the Commission focuses on teen seat belt use. The project has an evaluation component and an educational intervention. Given the incredible assistance given us by the Kennewick Police Department for the nighttime enforcement project, Kennewick was a logical pick for the development and testing of the teen seat belt intervention. True to their nature, the Kennewick cops stepped up to the plate and helped facilitate the meetings for the teen seat belt project which required connections with numerous local high school officials and others.

We've learned through the development stages of this project just what a top notch group of professionals the Kennewick Police personnel are, from the Chief on down. They are completely committed to the task of reducing collision injuries and deaths. We call the Kennewick cops the "The A Team," and they live up to their name.

Specify proven strategies or innovative strategies with a strong evaluation component used:

The Kennewick Police Department follows the procedures set forth by the Traffic Safety Commission in their efforts to promote seat belt use. The Commission's best practice strategy calls for visible police patrols and messaging about ticketing (Click it or Ticket). The visibility has involved media coverage generated by the Commission with assistance from local law enforcement, such as Kennewick PD. When the news media want local interviews, Kennewick PD has been extremely available and helpful. When reporters want to do ride-alongs, or film nighttime patrols from intersections, Kennewick PD has helped with any and all assistance we've needed. When the Commission needed assistance finding areas where variable message road signs could be positioned, again Kennewick PD facilitated the effort.

The teen seat belt educational project is an innovative strategy being developed and tested by the Commission, but with assistance provided by Kennewick PD. Kennewick PD helped the Commission know of and attend meetings with education officials. Kennewick PD is supplying extra enforcement of the intervention activities to ensure that the project runs smoothly. Kennewick has been an integral partner in the project thus far. Kennewick PD is our "A" Team.